

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Effective on 12/08/2004.

Fees pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (H.R. 4818).

FEE TRANSMITTAL
For FY 2005☐ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$) 910.00

Complete if Known

Application Number	10/714,512
Filing Date	November 14, 2003
First Named Inventor	Jean Ellen Johnson
Examiner Name	Avila, S.P.
Art Unit	3617
Attorney Docket No.	STE-1-1001

METHOD OF PAYMENT (check all that apply)☒ Check ☐ Credit Card ☐ Money Order ☐ None ☐ Other (please identify): _____☐ Deposit Account Deposit Account Number: 501050 Deposit Account Name: _____

For the above-identified deposit account, the Director is hereby authorized to: (check all that apply)

☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below, except for the filing fee☒ Charge any additional fee(s) or underpayments of fee(s) under 37 CFR 1.16 and 1.17☐ Credit any overpayments**WARNING:** Information on this form may become public. Credit card information should not be included on this form. Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.**FEE CALCULATION****1. BASIC FILING, SEARCH, AND EXAMINATION FEES**

Application Type	FILING FEES		SEARCH FEES		EXAMINATION FEES		Fees Paid (\$)
	Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee (\$)	Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee (\$)	
Utility	300	150	500	250	200	100	
Design	200	100	100	50	130	65	
Plant	200	100	300	150	160	80	
Reissue	300	150	500	250	600	300	
Provisional	200	100	0	0	0	0	

2. EXCESS CLAIM FEES**Fee Description**

Each claim over 20 (including Reissues)

Fee (\$)	Small Entity Fee (\$)
50	25

Each independent claim over 3 (including Reissues)

200	100
-----	-----

Multiple dependent claims

360	180
-----	-----

Total Claims	Extra Claims	Fee (\$)	Fee Paid (\$)
--------------	--------------	----------	---------------

- 20 or HP = _____ x _____ = _____

HP = highest number of total claims paid for, if greater than 20.

Indep. Claims	Extra Claims	Fee (\$)	Fee Paid (\$)
---------------	--------------	----------	---------------

- 3 or HP = _____ x _____ = _____

HP = highest number of independent claims paid for, if greater than 3.

Multiple Dependent Claims

Fee (\$)	Fee Paid (\$)
----------	---------------

3. APPLICATION SIZE FEE

If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper (excluding electronically filed sequence or computer listings under 37 CFR 1.52(e)), the application size fee due is \$250 (\$125 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).

Total Sheets	Extra Sheets	Number of each additional 50 or fraction thereof	Fee (\$)	Fee Paid (\$)
--------------	--------------	--	----------	---------------

_____ - 100 = _____ / 50 = _____ (round up to a whole number) x _____ = _____

4. OTHER FEE(S)

Non-English Specification, \$130 fee (no small entity discount)

Fees Paid (\$)

Other (e.g., late filing surcharge): Request for Continued Examination & One-Month Extension Request

\$910.00

SUBMITTED BY

Signature		Registration No. (Attorney/Agent) 36,175	Telephone 206-957-2490
Name (Print/Type)	Darren J. Jones		Date July 20, 2005

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.136. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 30 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.



COPY

MAIL STOP AMENDMENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Jean Ellen Johnson

Attorney Docket No. STEA-1-1001

Serial No.: 10/714,512

Group Art Unit: 3617

Filing Date: November 14, 2003

Examiner: Avila, S.P.

Title: INTERNAL BODY ENCIRCLING BELT FOR PERSONAL FLOTATION
DEVICES

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS:

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE

Amendments to the claims begin on page 2 of this paper. Remarks begin on page 13 of this paper.

25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

-1-

STEA-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A system for a covered belt for a personal flotation device, the system comprising:
 - a buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body;
 - a cover, arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side of the buoyant material; and
 - a belt, arranged to encircle a portion of the body, positioned between at least a portion of the cover and the second side of the buoyant material, the belt passing through the cover at at least one location, the belt being stitched to the cover ~~near~~ adjacent the at least one location where the belt passes through the cover.
2. (Original): The system of Claim 1, wherein the cover includes stretchable fabric.
3. (Original): The system of Claim 2, wherein the stretchable fabric includes neoprene.
4. (Original): The system of Claim 1, wherein the belt includes nylon webbing.
5. (Original): The system of Claim 1, wherein the belt is arranged to encircle the body.
6. (Original): The system of Claim 1, wherein the belt is stitched to the cover at at least two locations.

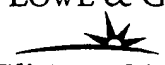
25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 2 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

7. (Original): The system of Claim 6, wherein the cover includes a first lateral edge, and a second lateral edge, and the belt is stitched to the cover near the first lateral edge and the second lateral edge.

8. (Original): The system of Claim 1, wherein the belt passes through the cover at at least one location.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Amended): The system of Claim 8 wherein the belt being stitched to the cover near the at least one location where the belt passes through the cover includes being stitched with a bar tack.

11. (Original): The system of Claim 8 wherein the belt passes through the cover at at least two locations.

12. (Original): The system of Claim 11 wherein the belt is stitched to the cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the cover.

13. (Original): The system of Claim 12 wherein the belt is stitched to the cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the cover includes being stitched with a bar tack.

14. (Original): The system of Claim 1 wherein the belt being stitched to the cover at at least one location includes being stitched with a bar tack.

15. (Previously Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:
at least one segment of buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body;


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 3 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

at least one cover, arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side of the segment of buoyant material; and

a belt, arranged to encircle the body, positioned between at least a portion of the cover and the second side of the buoyant material, the belt passing through the cover from inside to outside at at least one location, the belt stitched to the cover approximately adjacent the at least one location where the belt passes through the cover.

16. (Original): The system of Claim 15, wherein the cover includes stretchable fabric.

17. (Original): The system of Claim 16, wherein the stretchable fabric includes neoprene.

18. (Original): The system of Claim 15, wherein the belt includes nylon webbing.

19. (Original): The system of Claim 15, wherein the belt is stitched to the cover at at least two locations.

20. (Original): The system of Claim 19, wherein the cover includes a first lateral edge, and a second lateral edge, and the belt is stitched to the cover near the first lateral edge and the second lateral edge.

21. (Original): The system of Claim 15, wherein the belt passes through the cover at at least one location.

22. (Original): The system of Claim 21 wherein the belt passes through the cover at at least two locations.

23. (Original): The system of Claim 22 wherein the belt is stitched to the cover near the at least one location where the belt passes through the cover.


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 4 -

STE-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

24. (Original): The system of Claim 23 wherein the belt is stitched to the cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the cover.

25. (Original): The system of Claim 23 wherein the belt is stitched to the cover includes being stitched with a bar tack.

26. (Currently Amended): A system for a covered belt for a personal flotation device, the system comprising:

a buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, a second side arranged to face away from the body, and a first lateral edge, and a second lateral edge;

a stretchable cover, arranged to cover the second side of the buoyant material, having an inside facing towards the buoyant material and an outside facing away from the buoyant material; and

a belt, arranged to encircle a portion of the body, positioned between at least a portion of inside of the cover and the second side of the buoyant material, the belt passing from the inside to the outside through the cover at a first location near adjacent the first lateral edge and from the inside to the outside at a second location near adjacent the second lateral edge, and the belt stitched to the cover near adjacent the first location and near adjacent the second location.

27. (Original): The system of Claim 26, wherein the stretchable fabric includes neoprene.

28. (Original): The system of Claim 26, wherein the belt includes nylon webbing.

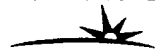
25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 5 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

29. (Previously Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:

- a back segment of buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body, and having a first right lateral edge and a first left lateral edge,
- a right front segment of buoyant material, having a third side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, a fourth side arranged to face away from the body, a second right lateral edge and a second left lateral edge, the right front segment attached to the back segment near the first right lateral edge and the second right lateral edge;
- a left front segment of buoyant material, having a fifth side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a sixth side arranged to face away from the body, a third right lateral edge and third left lateral edge, the left front segment attached to the back segment near the first left lateral edge and the third left lateral edge, the left front segment arranged to be detachably linked to the right front segment near the second left lateral edge and the third right lateral edge;
- a back cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side;
- a right front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the fourth side;
- a left front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the sixth side;
- at least one belt, arranged to encircle the body, sandwiched between at least a portion of the back cover and the back segment, sandwiched between at least a portion of the right front cover and the right front segment, and sandwiched between at least a portion of the left front cover and the left front segment, the at least one belt stitched at at least one location to the back cover, stitched at at least one location to

the right front cover, and stitched at at least one location to the left front cover, wherein the belt passes through the cover at at least one location and is stitched to the cover near where it passes through.

30. (Original): The system of Claim 29, wherein the stretchable fabric includes neoprene.

31. (Original): The system of Claim 29, wherein the belt includes nylon webbing.

32. (Original): The system of Claim 29, wherein the belt is stitched to the back cover at at least two locations.

33. (Original): The system of Claim 32, wherein the back cover includes a first right edge, and a first left edge, and the belt is stitched to the cover near the first right edge and the first left edge.

34. (Previously Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:
a back segment of buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body, and having a first right lateral edge and a first left lateral edge,
a right front segment of buoyant material, having a third side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, a fourth side arranged to face away from the body, a second right lateral edge and a second left lateral edge, the right front segment attached to the back segment near the first right lateral edge and the second right lateral edge;
a left front segment of buoyant material, having a fifth side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a sixth side arranged to face away from the body, a third right lateral edge and third left lateral edge, the left front segment attached to

the back segment near the first left lateral edge and the third left lateral edge, the left front segment arranged to be detachably linked to the right front segment near the second left lateral edge and the third right lateral edge;

a back cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side;

a right front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the fourth side;

a left front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the sixth side;

at least one belt, arranged to encircle the body, sandwiched between at least a portion of the back cover and the back segment, sandwiched between at least a portion of the right front cover and the right front segment, and sandwiched between at least a portion of the left front cover and the left front segment, the at least one belt stitched at at least one location to the back cover, stitched at at least one location to the right front cover, and stitched at at least one location to the left front cover, wherein the belt passes through the back cover at at least two locations.

35. (Original): The system of Claim 34 wherein the belt is stitched to the back cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the back cover.

36. (Original): The system of Claim 29, wherein the belt is stitched to the right front cover at at least two locations.

37. (Original): The system of Claim 36, wherein the right front cover includes a first right edge, and a first left edge, and the belt is stitched to the cover near the first right edge and the first left edge.


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 8 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

38. (Previously Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:

- a back segment of buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body, and having a first right lateral edge and a first left lateral edge,
- a right front segment of buoyant material, having a third side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, a fourth side arranged to face away from the body, a second right lateral edge and a second left lateral edge, the right front segment attached to the back segment near the first right lateral edge and the second right lateral edge;
- a left front segment of buoyant material, having a fifth side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a sixth side arranged to face away from the body, a third right lateral edge and third left lateral edge, the left front segment attached to the back segment near the first left lateral edge and the third left lateral edge, the left front segment arranged to be detachably linked to the right front segment near the second left lateral edge and the third right lateral edge;
- a back cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side;
- a right front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the fourth side;
- a left front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the sixth side;
- at least one belt, arranged to encircle the body, sandwiched between at least a portion of the back cover and the back segment, sandwiched between at least a portion of the right front cover and the right front segment, and sandwiched between at least a portion of the left front cover and the left front segment, the at least one belt stitched at at least one location to the back cover, stitched at at least one location to

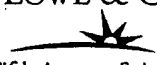
25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 9 -

STEAL-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

the right front cover, and stitched at at least one location to the left front cover, wherein the belt passes through the right front cover at at least two locations.

39. (Original): The system of Claim 33 wherein the belt is stitched to the right front cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the right front cover.

40. (Original): The system of Claim 29, wherein the belt is stitched to the left front cover at at least two locations.

41. (Original): The system of Claim 36, wherein the left front cover includes a first right edge, and a first left edge, and the belt is stitched to the cover near the first right edge and the first left edge.

42. (Previously Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:
a back segment of buoyant material, having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body, and having a first right lateral edge and a first left lateral edge,
a right front segment of buoyant material, having a third side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, a fourth side arranged to face away from the body, a second right lateral edge and a second left lateral edge, the right front segment attached to the back segment near the first right lateral edge and the second right lateral edge;
a left front segment of buoyant material, having a fifth side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a sixth side arranged to face away from the body, a third right lateral edge and third left lateral edge, the left front segment attached to the back segment near the first left lateral edge and the third left lateral edge, the left front segment arranged to be detachably linked to the right front segment near the second left lateral edge and the third right lateral edge;

a back cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the second side;
a right front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the fourth side;
a left front cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover at least a portion of the sixth side;
at least one belt, arranged to encircle the body, sandwiched between at least a portion of the back cover and the back segment, sandwiched between at least a portion of the right front cover and the right front segment, and sandwiched between at least a portion of the left front cover and the left front segment, the at least one belt stitched at at least one location to the back cover, stitched at at least one location to the right front cover, and stitched at at least one location to the left front cover wherein the belt passes through the left front cover at at least two locations.

43. (Original): The system of Claim 42 wherein the belt is stitched to the left front cover near the at least two locations where the belt passes through the left front cover.

44. (Currently Amended): A method for covering a belt on a personal floatation device, comprising:

arranging a cover over a buoyant material

sandwiching at least a portion of a belt between a portion of the cover and the buoyant material;

passing the belt through the cover at at least one location; and

stitching the belt to the cover ~~near~~ adjacent the at least one location that it passes through the cover.

45. (Original): The method of Claim 44, wherein arranging the cover over the buoyant material includes stretching the cover over the buoyant material.


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 11 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

46. (Original): The method of Claim 44, further comprising passing the belt through the cover at at least one penetration.

47. (Currently Amended): A personal flotation device, the device comprising:
a plurality of segments of buoyant material, each segment having a first side arranged to face towards a body of a user of the device, and a second side arranged to face away from the body, and each segment having a right lateral edge and a left lateral edge,
a cover of stretchable fabric arranged to cover the first side of the plurality of segments of buoyant material; and
at least one belt, arranged to encircle the body, and arranged to pass through the cover at a plurality of locations, the at least one belt being stitched to the cover near adjacent the locations that it passes through the cover.

48. (Original): The system of Claim 47, wherein the at least one belt is stitched to the cover near the plurality of locations where the at least one belt passes through the cover.

49. (Original): The system of Claim 48, wherein the at least one belt is stitched to the cover near the right lateral edge and the left lateral edge of at least one segment of buoyant material.

50. (Original): The system of Claim 47, wherein the at least one belt passes through the cover near the right lateral edge and the left lateral edge of at least one segment of buoyant material.

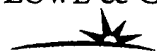
25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 12 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Final Office Action mailed April 5, 2005 in which the Examiner rejected Claims 1-8, 10-28, and 44-50 and allowed Claims 29-43. By way of response, Applicant has amended Claims 1, 26, 44, and 47. Applicant will address each of the rejections in the order presented in the Office Action.

SECTION 102(b) and 103(a) REJECTIONS

The Examiner's rejections of the claims herein are based on 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 103(a). All such rejections rely on either the Brown reference by itself (U.S. Patent No. 2,363,639) or a combination of Brown with other references, such as Khanamirian or Steger et al. Applicant thanks the Examiner for his clarification that he considers "near" to be relative term such that the claims read on the Brown reference.

As discussed in the Applicant's previous amendment, Brown discloses belt stitching at the back of a life jacket with straps that exit the jacket on the front. In contrast, the Applicant has shown and described the stitching as being at or near the openings in the vest cover. Thus, on pages 3 and 4 of the present specification (from page 3, line 33 through page 4, line 9), Applicant discusses the desirability of stitching near the location where the straps pass through the cover. The figures show a preferred embodiment of where the stitching is employed. As described in the specification, such stitching near where the straps pass through the cover provides a smooth surface to the vest and also reduces the opportunity for snagging. This would not be the case with the life preserver disclosed in Brown since the stitching is relatively remote from the openings.

To further clarify the claims to address the Examiner's concern that the stitching cannot be interpreted as being "near" when it is arranged relative to the openings as shown in Brown, Applicant has amended the independent claims to indicate that the belt is stitched to the cover "adjacent" the location where the belt passes through the cover. Applicant notes that Claim 15,

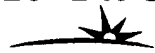
25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 13 -

STEA-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM ^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

while not currently amended, contain the language "approximately adjacent." Thus, Applicant believes that all claims clearly set forth the subject matter of the invention in a manner that addresses the Examiner's concern regarding relative terms.


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 14 -

STE-A-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}


701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

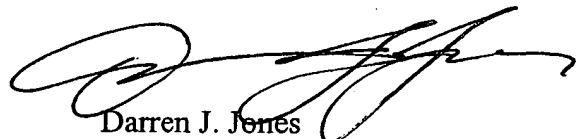
Applicant thanks the Examiner for his indication that Claims 29-43 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the remarks and clarifying amendments set forth herein, Applicant submits that all claims define over the prior art of record and request an early Notice of Allowance. If any further questions remain, Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}



Darren J. Jones
Registration No.: 36,715
Direct Dial: 206.957.2490

MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this communication is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via first class mail under 37 C.F.R. § 1.08 on the date indicated below addressed to: **MAIL STOP AMENDMENT**, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

6/3/05

Date of Deposit



Sharon S. Anderson


25315

CUSTOMER NUMBER

- 15 -

STEA-1-1001RFOA

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}



701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
Seattle, Washington 98104
206.381.3300 • F: 206.381.3301